

REMARKS

Claims 53-73 were presented for examination. All claims have been rejected under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over either Hein or Smith in view of Wientjens. The Examiner states that the primary references disclose all of the steps of claim 53 and differ only in the recitation of the independent wash and rinse loops and the filter. Wientjens is cited as disclosing independent rinse and wash loops. The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 53 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 55 which has been canceled. Step (c) now includes "passing at least a portion of the first rinse effluent through at least one rinse filter to produce a first rinse permeate and a first rinse retentate."

Wientjens does not disclose independent rinse and wash loops. Wientjens discloses separate prewash and wash reservoirs. See column 3, lines 21-26 and column 4, lines 39-45. Nothing at all is said in Wientjens concerning an independent rinse loop. Thus, the Applicants assert that amended claim 53 and independent claim 72 describe an invention which is not suggested or disclosed by any combination of the cited references.

Furthermore, the Applicants assert that claims 62, 71 and 73 are patentable independently from the rest of the claims. There is no suggestion in the cited references of the combination of an independent rinse loop wherein a rinse filter is utilized to produce a first rinse permeate and a first rinse retentate and allowing a portion of the rinse effluent to be transferred to the wash effluent.

For the reasons described above, the Applicants assert that the obviousness rejection has been overcome. An early notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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